

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**  
**MESSAGE, CONTROL AND REPORTING INTERFACE**  
**FOR A DISTRIBUTED NETWORK ACCESS SYSTEM**

5           In a network access system including an external processor and a  
programmable access device, the external processor transmits a control message to  
the programmable access device to establish a configuration of the programmable  
access device. The programmable access device then communicates messages to  
10           the external processor for service processing in accordance with the configuration.  
For example, the control message may be a filter control message that establishes  
a configuration of a packet header filter in the programmable access device. The  
packet header filter then communicates network messages filtered from a packet  
flow in accordance with the configuration established by the control message. To  
15           limit the communication of network messages from the programmable access  
device to the external processor, the programmable access device can send a  
message setting message interface flags in the programmable access device. The  
external processor may also transmit a monitor control message to the  
programmable access device to establish a configuration of a monitor in the  
programmable access device. The programmable access device then  
20           communicates reporting messages to the external processor in response to the  
configuration of the monitor.